

## Iowa Historical Building

ISSN 0003-4827

Material in the public domain. No restrictions on use.



This work has been identified with a [Creative Commons Public Domain Mark 1.0](#).

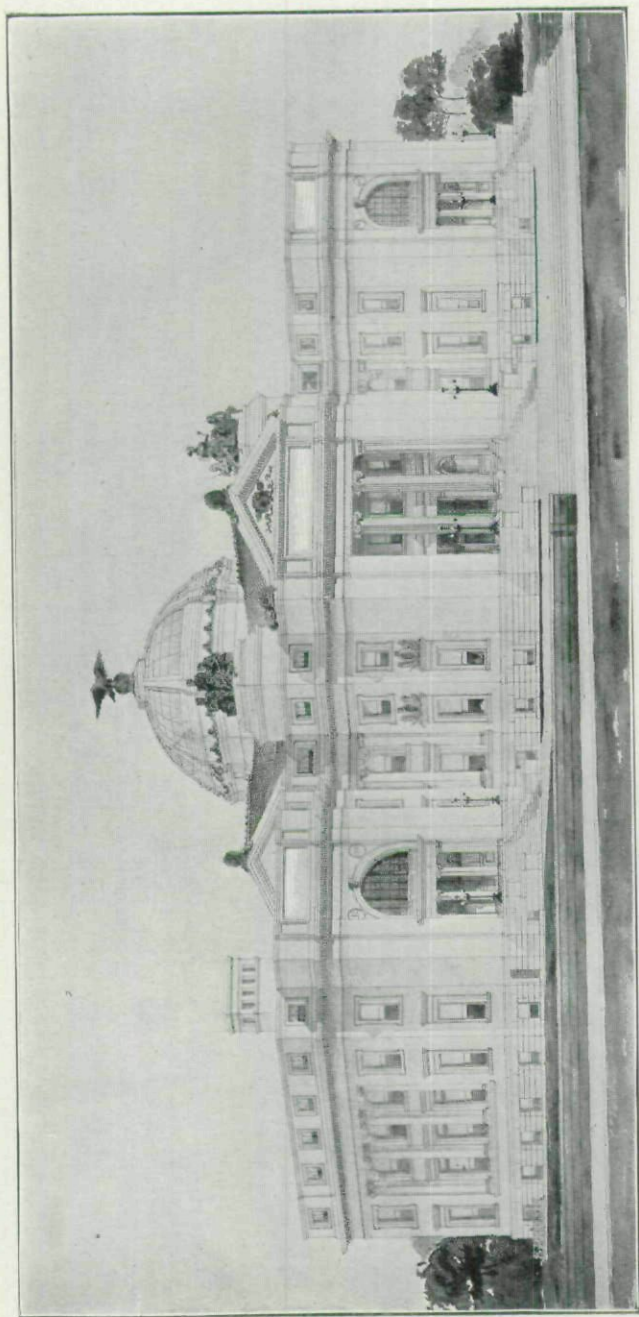
---

### Recommended Citation

"Iowa Historical Building." *The Annals of Iowa* 4 (1899), 81-106.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.2357>

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](#)



THE IOWA HISTORICAL BUILDING.

This edifice is located on East Grand Avenue, between 11th and 12th streets, on the opposite corner northeast of the Capitol. It will have a frontage of 280 feet. Total depth through the center 80 feet. The west wing, now in process of construction, is to be 68x72½ feet.

SMITH & GUTTERSON, Architects, Des Moines, Iowa.

# ANNALS OF IOWA.

---

VOL. IV, No. 2.

DES MOINES, IOWA, JULY, 1899.

3D SERIES.

---

## IOWA HISTORICAL BUILDING.

### LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE.

The letting of the contract for the erection of the Historical building was announced in THE ANNALS for October, 1898 (Vol. III, p. 569), and at the time the number was printed excavation for the foundation had been commenced. The mason work on the foundation was completed before winter set in. As soon as the frost was out of the ground in April work was commenced on the basement, the masonry of which was completed about the middle of May. The 17th day of that month was appointed as the date for laying the corner-stone by Gov. Leslie M. Shaw. This event marked the beginning of the superstructure. From present indications the building will be completed on the first of October, 1899, in accordance with the terms of the contract.

It was intended and so arranged that the exercises attendant upon the laying of the Corner-stone should take place on the grounds where the building is in course of erection, and the following programme was accordingly published:

#### ORDER OF EXERCISES.

1. Call to Order, . . . . . HON. AZRO B. F. HILDRETH  
Of Charles City.
2. Invocation, . . . . . REV. WILLIAM SALTER, D. D.  
Of Burlington.
3. Opening Remarks, . . . . . HON. JAMES HARLAN  
President of the Day.
4. Music, . . . . . "AMERICA"  
Audience led by the Double Quartette.
5. Laying of the Corner-Stone, . . . . . GOV. LESLIE M. SHAW
6. Music, . . . . . Byers' "IOWA"  
Audience led by the Double Quartette.

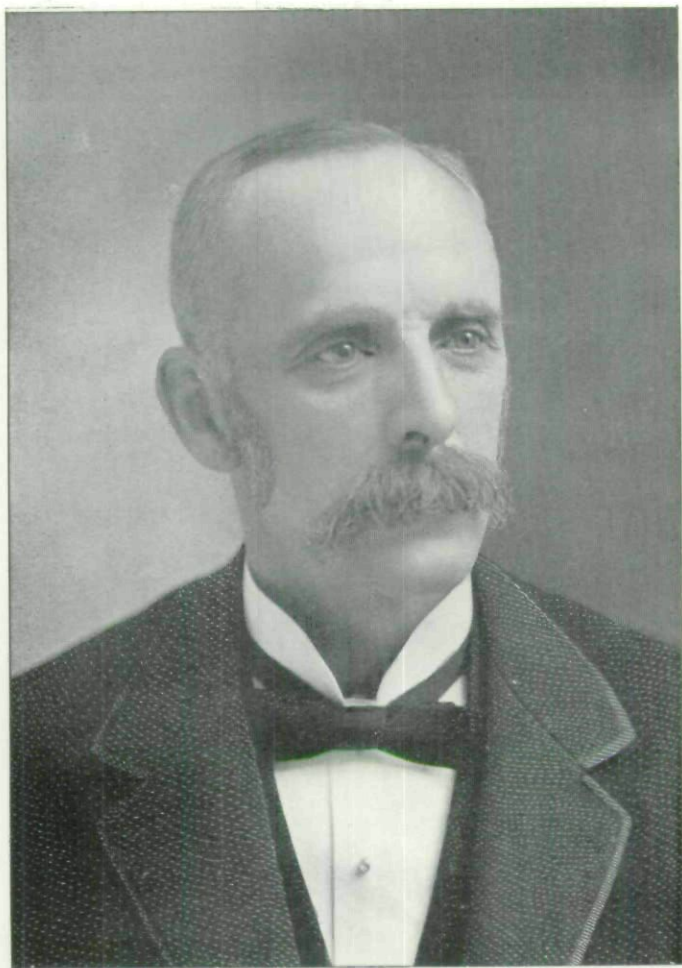
- |                  |                                       |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 7. Address,      | HON. JOHN A. KASSON                   |
| 8. Music,        | Hussey's "IOWA—BEAUTIFUL LAND"        |
|                  | Double Quartette.                     |
| 9. Remarks,      | HON. THEODORE S. PARVIN               |
| 10. Music,       | "THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER"            |
|                  | Audience led by the Double Quartette. |
| 11. Benediction, | REV. FATHER B. C. LENEHAN             |
|                  | Of Boone.                             |

But the morning of May 17 was dark and cloudy and a heavy rain had been falling for several hours. It was, therefore, deemed prudent to hold the ceremonial exercises in the rotunda of the capitol, after the laying of the Corner-stone. Toward midday the sun came out warm and bright, giving promise of a pleasant afternoon. A line of carriages was formed at 1 p. m. at the Savery House for the purpose of conveying to the site of the Historical Building those who were to take part in the exercises, together with distinguished guests who were in attendance. The whole affair was under the general direction of Adjutant-General M. H. Byers, but the party from the Savery was arranged by Col. E. G. Pratt, Mr. W. H. Fleming and Mr. W. S. Richards. The carriages conveyed the following people:

- No. 1. John A. Kasson, James Harlan, Gov. L. M. Shaw, Mrs. Shaw.
- No. 2. Azro B. F. Hildreth, Mrs. Hildreth, Secretary of State George L. Dobson.
- No. 3. Ex-Gov. F. M. Drake, Mrs. Goss, Mrs. Carpenter, Miss Eva Shontz.
- No. 4. Theodore S. Parvin, Treasurer of State John Herriott, Mrs. Herriott, Miss Herriott.
- No. 5. Congressman and Mrs. D. B. Henderson, Congressman and Mrs. Lot Thomas.
- No. 6. Senator W. B. Allison, Congressman J. F. Lacey, Congressman Thomas Hedge, Lieutenant Governor J. C. Milliman.
- No. 7. Supreme Judges H. E. Deemer, C. M. Waterman, G. S. Robinson, and Attorney General Milton Remley.
- No. 8. Supreme Judge and Mrs. S. M. Ladd, Supreme Judge Josiah Given, Congressman Joe Lane.
- No. 9. Senator and Mrs. John H. Gear, Ex-Governor and Mrs. William Larrabee.
- No. 10. Charles T. Hancock, Hon. and Mrs. J. O. Crosby.

The distinguished party, escorted by Troop A, Iowa National Guards, commanded by Capt. Harry Polk, reached the





*Yours Very Truly,  
Leslie M. Shaw.*

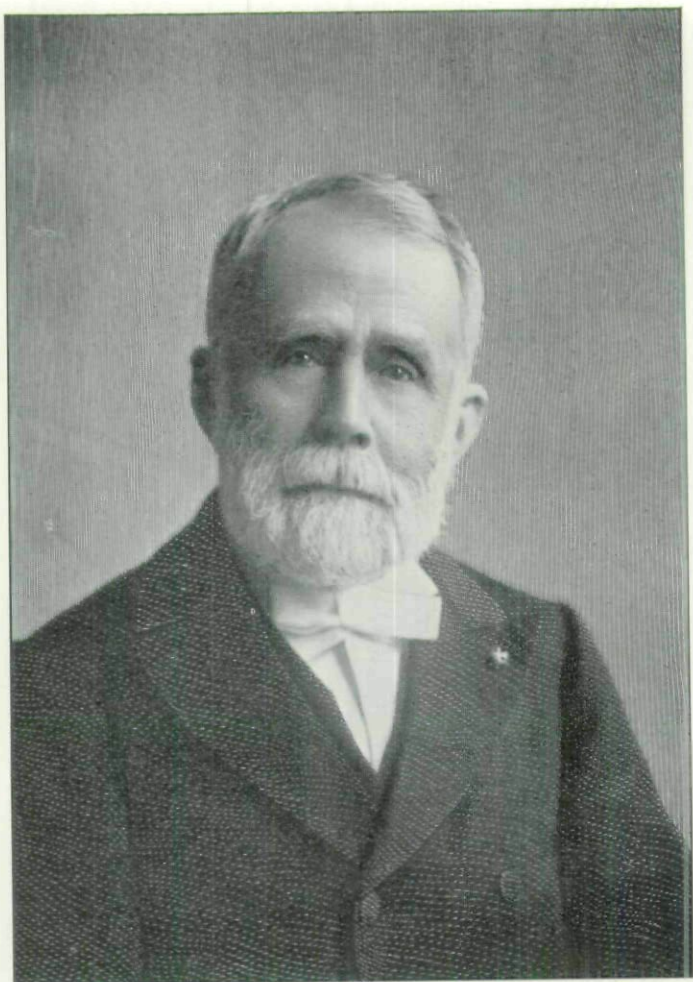
LESLIE M. SHAW.  
Governor of the State of Iowa, 1897—

Historical Building corner a few minutes after 2 p. m. Upon leaving the carriages, the party, preceded by the governor's staff in uniform, commanded by Gen. Byers, repaired at once to the first story of the building where the Corner-stone was to be laid. For some little time the air had been filled with martial music by Maj. A. S. Carper's drum corps. A great crowd of people, estimated as high as 10,000, had assembled about the grounds. A box made of rolled copper contained the historical documents which it had been decided to place within the corner-stone. The stone bore the inscription, "IOWA, A. D. 1899." A cavity had been excavated in the under side to fit down over the copper box. The box was placed in position upon a bed of cement, which was extended and smoothed by Gov. Shaw and the assisting masons to form a proper resting-place for the stone. The silver trowel used by Gov. Shaw was the same with which Gov. Samuel Merrill laid the Corner-stone of the Capitol, Nov. 23, 1871. As soon as these dispositions were completed the corner-stone of the Iowa Historical Building was slowly and noiselessly lowered into its position. Gov. Shaw then made this simple announcement: "In behalf of and in the name of the people of Iowa, I proclaim this Corner-stone well set." The following is a list of the contents of the copper casket:

1. The Holy Bible.
2. The Constitution of Iowa of 1846.
3. The code of Iowa, edition of 1897, which includes, in addition to the laws, the Declaration of Independence, articles of confederation and perpetual union between the states, the Constitution of the United States, the ordinance of 1787, the organic laws of Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa, an act for the admission of the states of Iowa and Florida, and the Constitution of Iowa.
4. The first, second and third biennial reports of the Historical Department of Iowa.
5. Volumes 1, 2 and 3 of *THE ANNALS OF IOWA*, 3d series.
6. Thirteen volumes of the Official Register of Iowa—1886-98—contributed by Mr. W. S. Richards.
7. Iowa Official Register for 1899.
8. The census of Dubuque and Des Moines counties (Wisconsin territory) in 1838—two pamphlets, published by the Historical Department.

9. The historical and comparative census of Iowa, 1836-80.
10. The census of Iowa, 1885.
11. The census of Iowa, 1895.
12. Dr. J. L. Pickard's History of the State University of Iowa, with portraits of all its presidents and three views of the buildings.
13. Proceedings at the laying of the corner-stone of the new Iowa capitol, November 23, 1871.
14. Address of Hon. John A. Kasson at the inauguration of the capitol, January 17, 1884.
15. Message of Governor Samuel J. Kirkwood to the extra war session of the general assembly, May 16, 1861.
16. Biennial messages of Governors Merrill, Carpenter, Gear, Sherman, Larrabee, Boies, Jackson and Drake.
17. Inaugural address of Governor Leslie M. Shaw.
18. Reports of the commissioners in charge of the construction of the capitol building, 1870-86.
19. Iowa City, a contribution to the early history of Iowa, by B. F. Shambaugh.
20. Constitution and records of the Claim Association, of Johnson county, with introduction and notes, edited by B. F. Shambaugh.
21. The Midland Monthly, Vol. I, No. 5, containing an article relating to the historical collections of Iowa, by F. W. Bicknell.
22. Map of Iowa by Willard Barrows, 1845.
23. Iowa railroad map, edition of 1899.
24. Bulletin of State Institutions, No. 1, by the Iowa Board of Control.
25. "Iowa at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893."
26. The Life of James W. Grimes, by Dr. William Salter.
27. "John Brown Among the Quakers and Other Sketches," by Hon. Irving B. Richman. (Contributions to early Iowa history).
28. "Iowa in War Times," by S. H. M. Byers.
29. Roster of the Forty-ninth, Fiftieth, Fifty-first and Fifty-second regiments of Iowa infantry and the Fifth and Sixth Iowa batteries, organized in 1898.
30. Roster of Spirit Lake Expedition, 1857.
31. Iowa Agricultural College—Illustrated Compendium, 1899.
32. Rules of the Twenty-seventh General Assembly of Iowa.
33. Reports of the first, second, third and fourth re-unions of the Tri-State Old Settlers' Association of Illinois, Missouri and Iowa, held at Keokuk in 1884, 1885, 1886 and 1887.
34. "Higher Education in Iowa," by Prof. Leonard F. Parker, Washington, 1893.
35. Biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, November, 1895, by Hon. Henry Sabin.
36. Reports of reunions of the Pioneer Law Makers' Association of Iowa, 1886-1898—five pamphlets.
37. Copies of the daily newspapers of Des Moines, May 16 and 17, 1899.





*Very Cordially yours,  
William Salter*

REV. WILLIAM SALTER, D. D.

Pastor of the First Congregational Church of Burlington, Iowa, since March  
15, 1846; Author of the "Life of James W. Grimes," etc., etc.



After laying the corner-stone Gov. Shaw announced that the farther exercises would take place in the rotunda of the capitol. In the state house a platform had been erected just west of the dome and facing the grand stairway. Several hundred seats had been placed under the dome and in the corridors, but they were sufficient for only a small fraction of the great audience which soon filled every nook and corner of the second and third floors of the edifice. It was a matter of some difficulty for those who were to occupy seats on the stand to make their way through the dense throngs. This was finally accomplished and the exercises were promptly commenced. The following gentlemen were seated on the platform: Hon. James Harlan, Hon. John A. Kasson, Senator W. B. Allison, Senator John H. Gear, Gov. L. M. Shaw, Ex-Gov. William Larrabee, Ex-Gov. F. D. Jackson, Ex-Gov. F. M. Drake, Rev. William Salter, D. D., Rev. Father B. C. Lenehan, Azro B. F. Hildreth and Charles Aldrich.

The rotunda, gallery and corridors were filled by an eager crowd, all anxious to witness the proceedings and listen to favorite speakers. Hon. A. B. F. Hildreth, the venerable Charles City editor, called the assemblage to order, immediately introducing the Rev. William Salter, D. D., of Burlington, who invoked the Divine Blessing in the following words:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.

We thank Thee that Thou hast placed Thine earthly children in families, and in states and nations. Here and now, we especially thank Thee that in this century Thou hast called into being the commonwealth of Iowa, and made it a component part of the United States of America. We praise Thee that where in the beginning of the century was an alien jurisdiction and a wild domain, Thou hast changed the scene; Thou hast dispossessed the darkness; Thou hast brought in the light. In Thy Providence, the hunting grounds and the war grounds of savage and mutually hostile tribes have been turned into cultivated fields, into pastures and orchards and gardens, into cities and villages of industry and order, into homes of a peaceful and happy people. Blessed be the Lord God for the transition; and let all the people say, Amen.

We invoke the Divine Blessing upon the endeavor to preserve and perpetuate the history of this transformation, to keep the records of the origin

and growth of the commonwealth, of the struggles of the pioneers, of the government and laws and institutions of the State, of its public men, of its soldiers, of its gifted and high-minded women, and of the thousand agencies of school and church, of philanthropy and reform, and of agricultural and commercial enterprise, that have brought Iowa at the close of the century to the front in the march of civilization.

O, Lord God of Marquette, the discoverer of our soil, of Washington, the father of his country, of Jefferson, who extended over this region the authority of the Nation, we beseech Thee to bless the commonwealth of Iowa and the successive generations of its people for a thousand years. May knowledge and understanding, may wisdom and virtue, may truth and justice, may religion and piety, may peace and happiness, may freedom's holy light, be ascendant in the land forever!

O, Thou from whom all good counsels and all just works do proceed, we fervently pray Thee to prosper the Historical Department of Iowa in the erection of the building, the corner-stone of which has now been laid by Thy Servant, the Governor. Be pleased to smile upon the exercises of this occasion. May speech and song and all that shall be said and done contribute to the public good, and be for the honor and advancement of the State. May the walls that shall be erected upon those foundations rise in strength and beauty. May the treasures that shall be enshrined there be preserved inviolate from corruption and loss for the instruction of the people to times afar, and Iowa remain a free and enlightened commonwealth while the sun shines till the heavens be no more.

And unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be the honor and the glory, world without end. Amen.

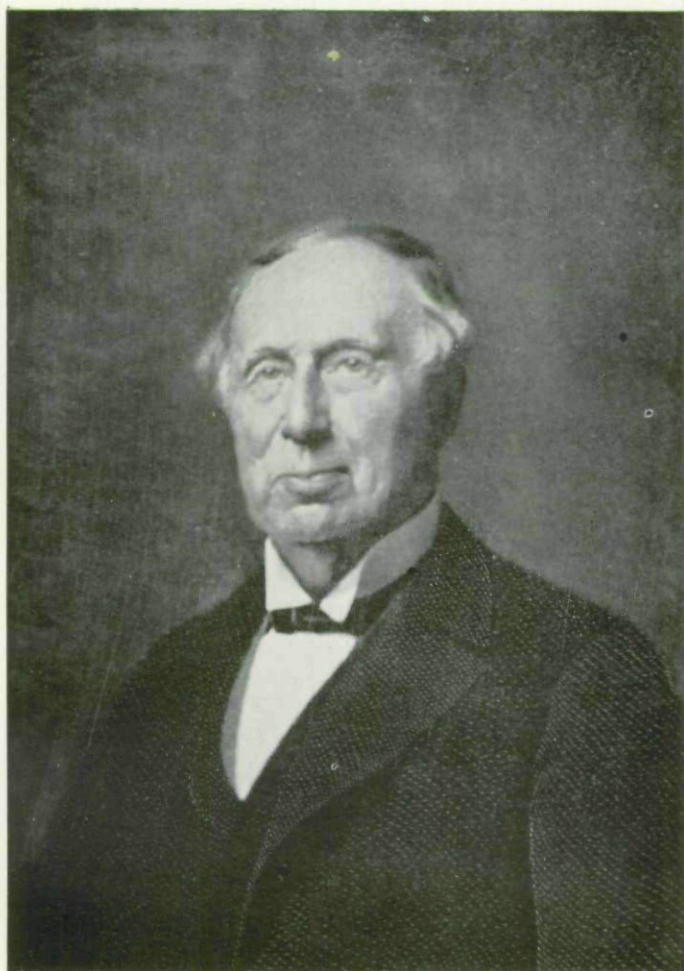
Mr. Hildreth then addressed the audience as follows:

*Fellow-Citizens:*

This is an auspicious day for the people of Iowa. Our thoughts revert to the time when Mr. and the late Mrs. Aldrich, who had a choice collection of historical relics, made a donation of them to the State, and thus initiated what is now known as the Historical Department of Iowa. Mr. Charles Aldrich, your curator, added to that collection by the thousands, until a large, commodious building for their safe keeping has become an imperative necessity, and we all came here today to lay the Corner-stone of that building.

No State of the American Union has progressed so rapidly in all that pertains to civilization as has our beloved Hawkeye State. In matters of education Iowa has a proud record as compared with other states; our free public schools are unsurpassed. The illiteracy of our people is hardly 1 per cent, while that of Massachusetts, with all her boasted culture, is more than 5 per cent!

Mr. Aldrich and I made Iowa the home of our adoption not quite fifty years ago. The State was then but sparsely populated. We found here one short railroad of forty-five miles, but today every one of our ninety-nine counties has from one to a dozen railroads. Indeed, the great and wealthy



*Faithfully yours,  
A. B. F. Hildreth.*

HON. AZRO B. F. HILDRETH.

Pioneer Journalist at Charles City, Iowa; Member of the State Board of Education, 1858-62, and of the Iowa House of Representatives, 1864-66.



State of New York has a less number of miles of railroad than has our beloved State.

In northern Iowa, where I have my home, and where not long ago was the home of the red man, I once saw, on a dark night, those broad prairies all ablaze. The prairie fires were spreading in all directions. No white man lived there. Today those prairies are dotted over with beautiful farms. There we see great red barns, surrounded with large herds of cattle, and nice dwelling houses, the abodes of prosperous and happy families. Are we not all proud and happy to have our homes in beautiful Iowa?

But, my friends, I am not here to make a speech. By direction of your executive committee, I have the honor to introduce the Hon. James Harlan as president of the day, who will now have charge of your deliberations and exercises.

Mr. Harlan was received with great applause. He first announced the singing of "America" by the Grant Club Double Quartette of Des Moines. The audience rose and remained standing, hundreds joining in the national hymn. At the close of the exercises Mr. Harlan said:

The General Assembly of the State of Iowa, in whom is vested its supreme power, has directed that an edifice shall be erected here to become a receptacle for mementos which shall serve as the elementary history of civilization within its boundaries, reaching backward to the date of our first legal settlements, in 1833, and forward to the present time, and onward, it is hoped, through the coming centuries. And we have convened to witness the first official act by the governor of our beloved State in executing this command. This is not a trivial event. It will mark an epoch in the development of our civilization as a commonwealth.

Of course I use the word "history" in its broadest sense, so as to include more than a record of the activities needful in procuring food, raiment and shelter for ourselves and families; more than is needed in the establishment and maintenance of schools, colleges and churches for the mental and moral culture of our children and the youth of the coming generations; and for the support of eleemosynary institutions; more than is needful in maintaining peace and order, and for the protection of our natural rights of person and property; more than is demanded in the performance of our part as a State of the Union for the national defense and the general welfare; more than is required in overcoming and applying the natural forces in the great industrial pursuits, including agriculture, the mechanical arts, mining, manufactures, transportation on land and sea, trade and commerce—domestic and foreign; more than is needed to secure eminence in the learned professions and effective practical statesmanship. In all of these respects the people of Iowa have, in little more than half a century, achieved gratifying success—ranking in excellence with the people of the other forty-four States constituting "The United States of Amer-



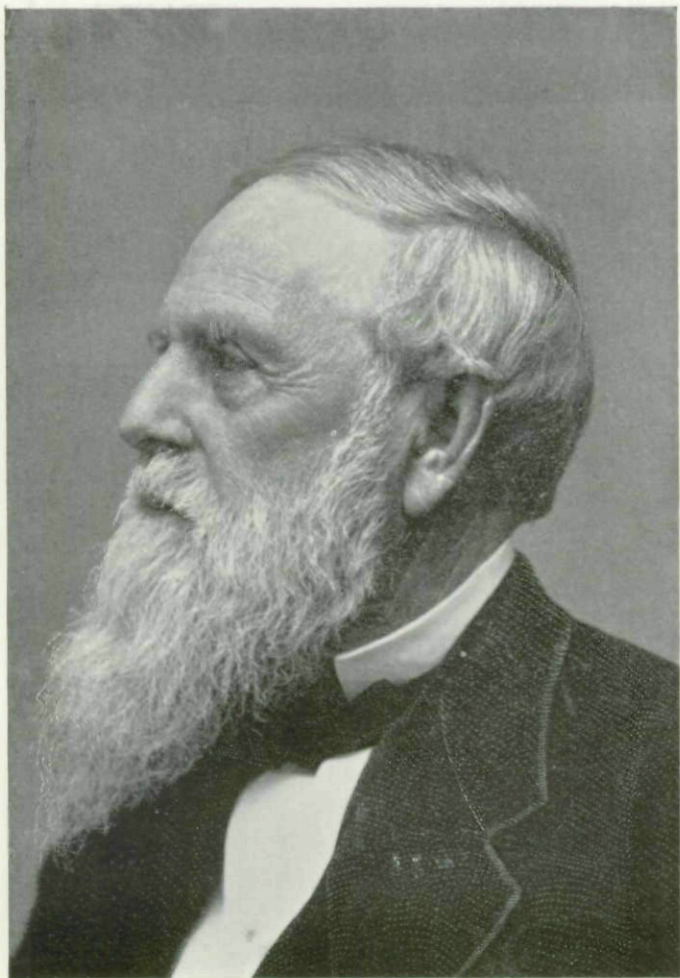
ica," which has, in a century and a quarter, become the equal of any one of the other great nations, and, in some respects, surpasses all of them. In agriculture, manufactures, inventions and in commerce—domestic and foreign—"The United States," with Iowa's help, leads them all—and in the acquisition of the good things of this life is without a rival; our accumulated wealth now being equal, as statisticians tell us, to the one-fourth part of all the existing wealth of the whole world! Our success in this respect is so brilliant as to lead hundreds of the business men of Europe to come here for investments; and not a few of their princes and nobles are shrewd enough to come here for wives; possibly with the expectation of using the "pin money" thus acquired to resuscitate broken down fortunes and to rebuild decaying old castles.

We do not care for the "pin money," but we do regret to part with our girls. And I now give these robbers fair notice that if they continue to come to Iowa for wives, our girls will, in God's own good time, Americanize Europe! So we say, I am sure, all of us!

And, I am rejoiced in being able to add, these enormous accumulations are not, in any sense, the fruitage of either private or national robbery, conquest or usurpation—but of enlightened industry and frugality on the part of the masses of our people. The vast territories acquired by us since our national birth in 1776, "for the expansion of the area of human freedom," or for the national defense and public convenience, including the Philippine archipelago (with two exceptions, in which the inhabitants voluntarily brought their countries to us in pursuit of their own interests), have been purchased in fair contracts made between us and their former owners, and have been paid for out of the public treasury, in honest American dollars; thus presenting a continuous record of public probity throughout our entire national existence which the other nations would do well to follow. Even the possessory right of the Indians to the lands acquired for white settlements has been paid for at its full commercial value to a nomadic race, although we were the legal owners of every acre of it by virtue of a previous purchase from its former national owners. Our government has never robbed them of anything. Nor will it ever rob the Cubans or Philipinos of anything that is theirs. Everybody may rest easy on that point.

And we merit congratulation for being the first nation, ancient or modern, to prosecute a great war, at our own expense, avowedly and in fact, "for the benefit of humanity," without a desire or expectation of aggrandizement!

Certainly in all that relates to domestic comfort, mental and moral culture, stern honesty and unbending probity, public and private honor, and unyielding courage coupled with ample generosity, the people of the United States have achieved marvelous results, and established a glorious record; in all of which the people of Iowa have contributed their full proportion. There is, I think, no other community of two and a quarter millions of people anywhere on earth, whose masses are as well provided with physi-



*Yours Truly,  
Jas. Harlan.*

HON. JAMES HARLAN.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1847; U. S. Senator, 1857-65, 1867-73;  
Secretary of the Interior, 1865-67.

cal comforts, or possessing more ample opportunities for intellectual, moral and social culture, coupled with the conveniences and even luxuries, which make this epoch a marvel in the world's history, than the people of Iowa.

But in the collection and preservation of emblems and memorials of our own activities in the settlement and development of our own beloved State—in the erection of monuments allegorically representing our own achievements, and in the creation of specimens of what is sometimes styled the "Fine Arts," arising from a clear perception of the beautiful, we Iowans have less cause for congratulation. In this respect we fall behind some of our sister states even in the Northwest. Our curator, who has happily inaugurated this work, and pushed it forward with a vigor and success that has created a necessity for more ample repositories, informs us that he has found at the capital of Wisconsin a much better collection of memorials of Iowa than we have at the capital of our own State. And we cannot easily forget that at the Columbian Exposition, in the city of Chicago, six years ago, the Iowa people failed to produce a single specimen of art work deemed, by the art commissioners, worthy of a place in the great art galleries, by the side of exhibits from our sister states, and from the old nations of Europe.

Up to the date of the inception of the edifice ordered to arise here, the State of Iowa has not been the patron of artists. The architecture of its public buildings is very good, but with one or two somewhat trivial exceptions the State of Iowa has ordered no other art work, and has given no encouragement to Iowa artists. The few paintings, now in the capitol building, are mostly portraits donated to the State, in pursuance of solicitations by the curator of the Historical Department, painted, in most cases, I believe, elsewhere. And, as far as I know, the State of Iowa does not own a single piece of statuary except those placed on "The Iowa Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument;" its first and only specimen of art work of that character; which has been severely, and, as I think, to some extent, justly criticised, on account of the absence of repose in the poise of the figure standing on its summit, the inaptness of the allegorical figure called "Iowa," reposing in its front, and the misconception called "History," standing in the rear. It is due, however, to the truth of history, to say that these three features of that which would otherwise be a gem of resplendent beauty, are departures from the design presented by the Iowa artist, the late Harriet A. Ketcham, and accepted by the commission; and these deformities, as I regard them, are due in design and execution to an artist born and educated in the north of Europe.

But it must not be inferred from this tardiness of the State that its people are destitute of the spiritual and celestial faculties which have crowned all other enlightened and refined peoples, ancient and modern, with artistic glory. Their perceptions of the beautiful are as clear, and their craving for its manifestation is as imperative as found in any other community. And if so, proper means and stimulus for artistic cul-



ture should be provided. This defect in our educational system should be speedily cured.

With this view, no doubt, the Legislature has ordered the erection of what is styled in the statute "A Memorial, Historical and Art Building." And surely it is meet and proper that Iowa's chief executive, his excellency, Leslie M. Shaw, should commence officially the execution of this mandate, by laying its chief Corner-stone.

The quartette then sang "Iowa—Beautiful Land," the words of which, recently written by Mr. Tacitus Hussey, of Des Moines, were set to original music by Judge Horace M. Towner, of Corning, Iowa. After this song Ex-Senator Harlan, in well-chosen and highly complimentary words, introduced the HONORABLE JOHN A. KASSON, who had been indicated as the Orator of the Day by universal acclaim. He was greeted with prolonged applause, and was frequently applauded during the course of his very able and most interesting address, of which the following is a full report:

*Mr. Chairman and Fellow Citizens:*

It is a welcome duty on this occasion to salute the governor, the executive and judicial officers and the citizens of Iowa here assembled, and to congratulate them upon this official inauguration of an enterprise so full of promise for the honor and progress of our State. To the General Assembly we offer our thanks for its wise liberality. As a citizen, and in behalf of our citizens, I also beg to publicly acknowledge the unwearied labor and patriotic perseverance of Charles Aldrich, the founder, promoter and curator of this enterprise, which is more far-reaching in its future development and educational benefits than perhaps any of us distinctly foresee today. In recent years the importance of historical collections has been more and more appreciated as aids to education, and it marks an epoch of our local history when the State supplements the general educational advantages of our State University and colleges and schools with the foundation of a historical museum freely accessible to all its people. We may confidently hope that citizens of the State will actively co-operate in its development here, as elsewhere in the Union, by liberal contributions to its enlargement.

The Historical Department, for which the State is providing a home, will be an important auxiliary in the development of the higher education of our future citizens. Older and more populous States have established the precedents for it. Our united republic has also given in its historic museum at Washington a brilliant example of its popular advantages. Throngs of citizens from all parts of our country wander through its galleries with wonder and delight and improvement. Vast additional collections await another building for their exhibition. It is acknowledged to





Very truly yours,  
John A. Kasson

HON. JOHN A. KASSON, LL. D.

Representative in the General Assembly, 1868-73; Representative in Congress, 1863-67, 1873-77 and 1881-84; U. S. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Austro-Hungary, 1879-81; Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Germany, 1884-85, etc., etc.

be one of the best methods "for the diffusion of knowledge among men." This was the avowed purpose of John Smithson in his donation to the United States upon which the Smithsonian Institution was founded. The government, being finally awakened to its importance, contributed to its development, and is now committed to its maintenance and wider extension. From the surplus of its collections it also contributes to the growth of similar enterprises in the states where the authorities show a lively interest in the encouragement of like institutions. It is a center of scientific interest and of men of science, who there pursue their studies in the light of nature and of history. It was in the first building there erected that Henry developed the possibility of telegraphic communication, a discovery which has wrought more changes in the relation of man to man and of nation to nation than any other in the world's history. Colleges and universities, whenever enabled to do so by benefactions of private wealth, have founded similar collections for the enlightenment of their students. No college or university is now considered complete in its educational equipment without access by its professors and students to museums and libraries illustrating the progressive evolution of man and of nature. For these are perpetual sources of human wisdom.

Educational undertakings of this nature do not spring up spontaneously, nor do they grow to full perfection without constant interest and nourishment. But the spirit which gives them vitality and maintains them is remarkably illustrated in the history of the American people. Our pioneer ancestors, in their early experience, while the wilderness was still unsubdued, and the struggle for life was hard and bitter, out of their poverty found means to lay the foundation of two great universities, with great museums of science and history. Their motives were both educational and religious. Religion and education were handmaidens, advancing side by side, and leading the march of American civilization. Religion without intellectual enlightenment, in their opinion, tended to superstition and education without religion tended to selfishness and loss of virtue. These principles have continued to guide the destiny of the American republic. May the day of their abandonment be forever postponed, for it would be the presage of its ruin. The descendants of such forefathers have carried this condition of a true civilization with them as they hewed their way through forests and across mountains and later dotted the prairies with their homes. All along their route they erected colleges and schools which were associated with their respective religious faiths. Schools and churches were the mile-stones left on the march of our migration westward all the way to the shores of the Pacific.

The modern increase of the wealth of the nation, extraordinary as it is, has been accompanied by equally extraordinary contributions of private wealth to educational and charitable establishments. This accumulation of great individual fortunes in the United States has occurred chiefly during the period since our civil war. Before that epoch they were rare. During these last thirty years of wonderful private prosperity there has been an

epidemic of private generosity for the noble purposes I have mentioned. From individual purses have been poured out thousands of dollars, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, in some single cases even millions of dollars, to found and endow these splendid enterprises of our advancing civilization. They have become so frequent that they have ceased to excite our astonishment, though they still awaken our fervent admiration. The brilliant history of these American benefactions to the men, the women, the youth of our country remains to be written, and will present the most glorious pages in the annals of the republic. It will illustrate and glorify the beneficent public spirit of a free and enlightened people. The roll of honor begins two centuries back, on the rough and sterile shores of New England, when a few hundreds of dollars represented as great a liberality as a hundred thousand now. As this admirable record is unfolded with the advancing time and movement of our people westward, there will be a pause in every state to celebrate the monuments of private liberality. The continuous roll will only end in California, where the single gift of one man for better public education surpassed all the benefactions of a great and wealthy state for the like object. His generous gift was never equalled by prince or potentate of Europe.

As we celebrate and commemorate the deeds of our patriotic heroes in war, so let us commemorate the generous deeds of our patriotic citizens in peace, for they also are laying deep the foundations of true American manhood and of an ideal republican citizenship.

The names of Girard at Philadelphia, Smithson, the English admirer of our republic, of Lenox, Astor, the Vanderbilts, Cornell and Jesup in New York, of Marsh at New Haven, of Rockefeller at Chicago, of Johns Hopkins at Baltimore, of Carnegie and Phoebe Hearst, of Stanford in California, and of many, many others only less distinguished, form a galaxy of glorious stars in the firmament of our American history.

In Iowa we have no colossal fortunes, nor can we expect them. They are only gathered in the great centers of business enterprise. Still, from their more modest accumulations, Iowans have contributed in the aggregate perhaps as generous a percentage of their earnings to promote the great purposes of our civilization as have the people of the wealthier states. Our denominational colleges, our churches, our local charities, our contributions to libraries, our self-taxation for advanced schools represent their spirit and their acts of liberality. They have had their source in the same high sense of duty to God and man which has been the main-spring of all the glories recorded in the history of our republic.

Some of the more prosperous men of Iowa, in the same spirit, will yet associate their names with the library, the historical collections and the works of art of this institution whose corner-stone we establish in the last year of this great century.

On such an occasion as this it appears to me there is no topic to which I can more suitably invite your attention than the future of Iowa.

We owe a double allegiance—to the State and to the nation. It is our



happy fortune to find these double duties absolutely harmonious in their obligations. Devotion to the interest of our State is also devotion to the national interests. As our educational and material interests prosper, so are the security and prosperity of the whole country augmented. In working for the one, we bring blessings to the other. Our patriotism has no limitations and no cross purposes. It will be a proud memory for us that Iowa has never clamored for the recall of her soldiers while the battle of the nation was waging and the national flag was flying in front of the enemy.

Among the nations of the world, each separate state has had its distinct law of life, its separate evolutionary development. The Chinese and the Tartar, the Turk, the Russian, has developed a state under his own proper laws of evolution. The Greek and the Roman, under like conditions of nature, developed a radically distinct history and different ideals of civilization. The Anglo-Saxon and the Latin nations of Europe have followed divergent paths, not only in Europe, but on the two continents of America. Notwithstanding our own national union, the evolution of Mississippi is in some respects quite distinct from that of Minnesota; of Pennsylvania from that of South Carolina; of Louisiana from that of Maine. Without criticising the different development of other states, or its causes, let us inquire what is Iowa's law of life; what must be the evolution of this State, which is the center alike of our interests and of our affection. It is upon this theme I have especially desired to address my old neighbors and fellow citizens, for I am convinced that if the State shall faithfully follow the appropriate laws of her evolution she has before her a distinguished and prosperous career, which will bring honor and enduring happiness to her people.

Iowa is not and cannot be a mining or manufacturing State. Her mining is chiefly for her own fuel. Without large water powers, without minerals in her soil or other exceptional advantages for manufactures, she cannot enter into profitable competition with other states which possess them. Her interior position forbids her the hope of becoming the center for wide commercial distribution. No great commercial city will ever spring up within her borders. East and south, north and west of her, local conditions and commercial relations are more favorable to the growth of cities. Iowa must recognize these facts and direct her energies within the laws of her own legitimate evolution.

These limitations, however, upon her lines of development are not adverse to her own prosperity, but form a part of the happy fortune which awaits her. If we possessed great resources of mining or manufacture, or great commercial marts, our native population would be flooded with alien and discordant elements, refusing our own high standard of citizenship and uninfluenced by our hereditary sense of public and private duty. Our own citizens would be caught in the hurried scramble for wealth and would forget in the selfish struggle for fortune the grander motives of our private and public life. The demoralization characteristic of crowded and unas-



simulated populations, having no common ideal of civilization, would inevitably follow, with its usual increase of crime. Moral and intellectual progress would be checked. The intelligent and patriotic vote would be overbalanced by selfish and reckless political forces. Political "bosses" then take the place of political leaders, and true greatness disappears from public life. Unhappily, the lowering of the tone of the masses by some unwritten law has for its consequence a corresponding degradation in the tone of their representatives in public office. The history of some American municipalities and states proves the truth of these conclusions.

Take the history of the two most populous and wealthy states for example and illustration. At the time of the revolution and of the formation of our Constitution they were chiefly agricultural states. They had no great cities and not many notable villages. Their people chiefly lived in their own houses and staked their fortunes in the soil. Great private wealth was unknown. Few possessed the highest liberal education; but these few were appreciated and honored. It was under these modest conditions of a scattered population, of a limited wealth, of a prevalent ownership in the soil and of the dominance of agriculture, that each of these states contributed to the public service the great historic names which have come down to us decorated with the halo of patriotism, of wisdom, and of historic glory. The names of Franklin, Wilson, Morris, Hamilton, Jay, Clinton, Livingston and their peers are among the precious heritage of the nation.

The conditions in these states have in more modern times radically changed, even within the lifetime of men still living. The pure air of heaven is becoming darkened from the chimneys of their countless factories. Many of their population spend their lives in subterranean employments, away from the light of the sun. The people more and more throng together in their great cities. They are discontented with country life. Their homogeneity is lost in the swarms gathered from the various races of the earth. The old standards of simple probity and honor which prevailed in the era of agriculture are obscured and even lost in the turmoil of unassimilated millions struggling everywhere and by contradictory methods for personal success. Great individual fortunes have appeared; but what has become now of their men once intelligently great, of their former political leadership, of their great statesmen? Who can name in public office today from those states one man comparable in ability, in wisdom and in lofty patriotism to the great citizens who came to the front of history in the simpler days of their devotion to agriculture, and who then laid the imperishable corner-stones of our republic?

If a dense population, if vast mechanical industries, if enormous accumulations of wealth tend to produce greatness in the intellectual and moral development of a state, or to promote eminent ability in statesmanship, surely we should find evidence of it in comparing the present with the past history of these states. The single city of New York today has a population surpassing that of the State of Iowa. Yet, who among

you can recall one of that city's representatives now in congress, or would affix the word "statesman" to his name? I do not imply that statesmen do not or cannot exist in a great city or thickly populated state. But it is evident that great cities do not admire them, do not want them even if they produce them, and will not advance them into the public service. There is something in the conditions surrounding the dense and mixed population, something involved also in the maddening effort for the rapid acquisition of wealth, which is intrinsically hostile to that even balance of mental and moral powers required to constitute a statesman. The social excitement and the feverish temperament created by the constant struggles of a crowded competition are adverse to reflection and to wisdom.

In respect to our State, on the contrary, so exclusively devoted to agriculture, whose farmers still own the soil and aspire to no great inequalities of wealth, I venture to quote a remark recently made to me by an observing southern member of congress respecting the men our farmers have chosen to represent them in national affairs. "Taking the delegation together," said he, "Iowa has the ablest delegation in congress of any state in the Union." This would indicate that our agriculturists still, as of old, admire intellectual ability and love to contribute of their best to the public service.

Let us glance over a broader field of our national history. Washington was a farmer. The other three famous presidents from Virginia were countrymen and farmers. The two Adamses came from country homes. Jackson and Polk were raised and lived in agricultural states. Lincoln and Grant had their origin on rural soil and were surrounded by agricultural interests. Our president of today was a country boy, also developed under agricultural influences which gave him that admirable temper and tranquil wisdom which have enabled him to guide the republic through the storms of recent war into the haven of a victorious peace. It would seem to be an instinct of the average American to select for exalted public position the men who are reared under the patient, persevering, well-balanced influences of the agricultural life. Even Bismarck, the foremost statesman of modern Europe, sprang from country soil and farming forefathers. Surrounded by the great diplomats of all nations, I have heard him talk of the yield of his turnip fields and of his forest lands with pride. The president of France, Loubet, was reared on a farm, which his peasant mother still cultivates. It is not from the bosom of inherited wealth, nor from the commercial counting room, nor from the noisy factory or the fiery furnace and rolling mill, that wise and broad statesmanship, equal to the grandeur of the nation to be served, can be expected to spring. Characters destined to such service require the educational environment of the country, the influences of tranquil nature, the stimulus of the clear country sun, the restfulness of the evening sky, the lessons of patience and foresight taught by the revolving seasons and the patient preparation of the fruitful ground. For the majority of men the community of a dense population serves to dissipate the deeper thought, the more serious ambitions and higher aspir-



ations of generous manhood. Most denizens of the great city take opinions from the caucus or the secret committee. The farmer meditates. He deliberates while the crops are ripening. He observes that nature does not jump from the seed time to the harvest, but advances slowly by regular stages to its final ripening. He knows that it is by the same steady advance that men become fitted for public life and that states grow to greatness. He sees nature moving by fixed principles of progress, and not surprising him by new theories or miraculous events. He never tries the experiment of making sixteen kernels of corn always equal to one grain of wheat in the market. He grows wise, as we all can, by the observation of natural laws. It is therefore to be expected that Iowa, in her steady evolution, prepares herself to become the mother of statesmen.

The production of high political character and qualification for office is a legitimate aspiration for a State which desires honor and fame in the sisterhood of states. Yet there is a better and happier object which lies within the lines of Iowa's evolution. This ideal is the wide diffusion of comfort and contentment among her people.

The proper conditions for this object did not and could not exist in the earlier years of the settlement of the State. It was then a question of a merely tolerable shelter and needful food. Comfort, as we now understand it, was not then attainable. Discontent was natural and led to an effort for better conditions. Then came schools for the diffusion of knowledge, and churches for the diffusion of the principles of morality and religion, and colleges to satisfy the higher aspirations of our ambitious youth, and great asylums were established to relieve the private family from the burdens of insanity and misfortune, and railroads for the cheaper transportation of products and quick movement of men. Then, at last, the State itself set the example of seeking greater comfort and more contentment by abandoning its old capitol building and erecting a larger and more fitting home for its government.

With the same earnestness with which through five laborious years we urged this action on the part of the State, I now urge similar action on the part of the farmer in respect to his own house and its environment. This movement on his part is required in order to secure for the State the splendid results promised in its regular order of development. The State no longer depends for its prosperity on foreign immigration. There is only sufficient room left for the occupation of her own children if they will continue to make their homes around the homes of their fathers. The disposition of our young men is to leave the farm for other scenes of activity. It is the chief misfortune that threatens our State. They go for education to the college or university, or stop with the common school and then turn with the inquiry on their lips into what other state or into what city they shall go for their career in life. It is a misfortune for any progressive state to lose its own native life-blood and substitute for it that of aliens and strangers. It is a check upon the natural order of its evolution, for it is the educated children, "to the manner born," who best ad-

vance the development initiated by their fathers. Why this desire to migrate from the scenes of their childhood? Why ignore the home farm? To love the land and even the locality of one's birth is an instinct of humanity. There must be some reason strong enough to overcome this instinct.

This migratory desire and the abandonment of the agricultural life demand some inquiry into the causes. The farm life is neglected because it is not made attractive. A mere shelter for the family and for the animals belonging to it, out on the open prairie, though the soil be as rich as that of Eden, does not attract the love and interest of an intelligent boy. Life is made too hard for him. There is not joy enough in the household. The conditions are too rigid and sombre. But beautify the same prairie scene with comfortable homes, each with its veranda for the summer evening's talk and the moonlight companionship of the young; surround it with a garden of well-kept flowers and flourishing vines and the delightful verdure of a lawn with its blooming shrubbery; environ it with fruit trees and with scattered shade trees selected for their enduring growth; supply the parlor shelves with some books of science, history, travels, and general literature, and with one or two monthly magazines, all of which are now so cheap as to be within the reach of every farmer; let some pet animals be found on the grounds to attract the love of the children—do this, make this the continuous object of the family life, and Iowa would become a paradise in comparison with which Eden itself might appear uninteresting. The Iowa boy would only leave it with sorrow and return to it with joy. The value of the farm would increase to a fortune, and the son would stay by it and care for the grave of the father. The mountain mine and the new land obtained from a dwindling Indian tribe would have no attraction for him. He would become a loyal hereditary citizen, co-operating in the upbuilding of a noble and happy State.

We Americans do not sufficiently love and honor the land. We do not appreciate the dignity that belongs to its ownership and cultivation, although the historical aristocracy of England, and of nearly all Europe, is founded upon it. The country residents and gentry are there the backbone of the state. The life and position of a gentleman are considered incomplete without a country home. Their very names have come from the family lands. Hard necessity alone can make them part with their hereditary acres. But our lands have been so abundant that we have treated them like common merchandise. For a few dollars per acre of advanced value we have been ready to bargain away all landed property.

Some of us have seen the time when the restless tide of farmers moved their habitations as freely as the Indian changed his camping ground, or the buffalo his grazing range. Had there been no change in this respect Iowa would not have been worth living in today. The word home means a family seat, with all its increasing and delightful associations of family life, of home-bred creatures and home-raised meats, and fruits, and flowers, and children bred in the home, and going out of its doors in marriage. This will yet come to Iowa, as it already exists in older states. We shall yet know and appreciate the pride and dignity of having a home on God's

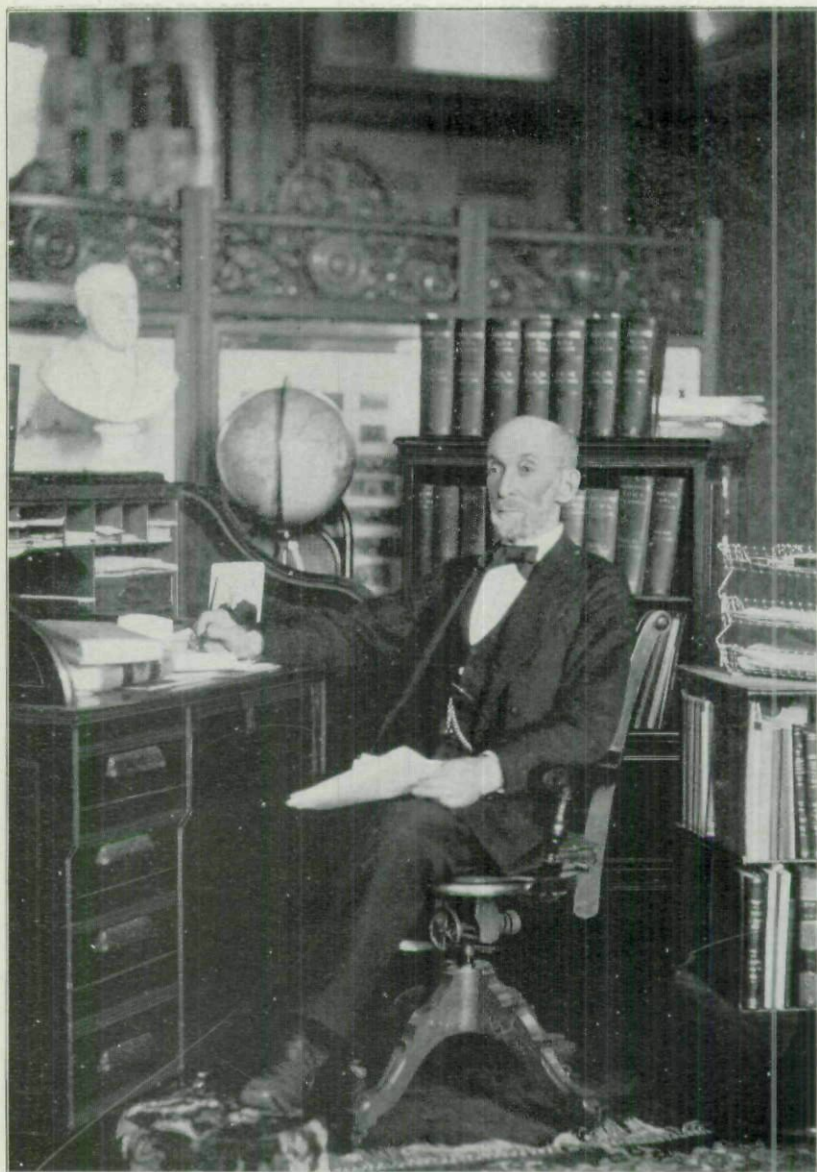


own fruitful ground, where we will live in tranquility and die in peace; and which we shall leave to our children after us. Only the inevitable overflow of an excessive population will then desire to abandon that agricultural paradise which is within the lines of the natural evolution of Iowa.

It is no mere poet's dream which I commend to the consideration of our people on farms and in villages. It is simply an easy labor of sensible and practical progress in the addition of value to landed property, while, at the same time, it yields comfort and attraction to the home. It is an investment upon which the interest is promptly enjoyed. In so far as it relates to the planting of trees, it is a positive requirement of nature of the highest importance to the farmer. Some years ago while crossing the Sierra Nevada in the mining region, I remonstrated with the manager against stripping the mountains of all their growing timber for use in the mines, and said to him the farmers there could with difficulty now raise vegetables for want of rain, and the next generation would not find rain enough to raise an acre of potatoes. He replied, "D—n the next generation; we are making money now, and that is all we care for." That is the spirit of devastation. The farming interest is directly opposed to it. Men of science tell us there is going on a gradual desiccation of the earth's surface. This is rapidly accelerated by the destruction of timber, especially in the region of the sources of streams.

In the planting of trees is found one of the means of counteracting this tendency of nature toward the desiccation of the soil. The only question of the Iowa farmer should be how much of his land he can afford to devote to forest culture. While he does this for himself, he should also energetically instruct his Representatives in Congress to maintain, against the vandalism of the mining and lumbering interests, the great mountain forest reservations which protect vast tillable regions against the drought of the soil.

The conditions of a life chiefly agricultural, including the towns which are environed and supported by agriculture, also demand a literature and journalism wholly distinct from that which supplies the wants and nourishes the moral—or immoral—nature of great cities and dense populations. The peculiar mental fever that is developed in human crowds always excited by the perpetual friction of man against man, demands a literature which feeds that excitement. It demands a "yellow novel" and a "yellow" newspaper. Many old-time, truth-telling newspapers of great cities dwindle in patronage. The "new" journalism flourishes in the densely populous city which it corrupts with its reckless scandals, its frequent falsity, its immodesty and its columns distended with details of crime. One-half the crime of the country is the result of this public familiarity with details of crime which appeal to the imagination of youth, and recur to the memory in time of temptation. God forbid this kind of journalism shall ever invade the tranquil homes of agriculture and poison the pure fountains of its social life. Sensationalism provokes a mental drunkenness which distorts the judgment and ends in moral disease. Iowa journals, I believe, do not, ought not, and will not find in sensationalism a source of profit.



*Theodore S. Parvin,*

HON. THEODORE S. PARVIN, LL. D.

Private Secretary to Gen. Robert Lucas, first Governor of Iowa Territory, 1838;  
 first Librarian of Iowa Territory, 1839; District Prosecuting Attorney, 1839;  
 Register of State Land-Office 1857-59; Grand Secretary of Masonic  
 Grand Lodge of Iowa, 1844-51 and since 1852; founder of the  
 Masonic Library at Cedar Rapids.



The sensational condition is alien to rural society, to its habits of thought, and stories of scandal and crime are unwelcome to the household whose members find more happiness and pleasure in looking at a virtuous world than at a world of crime. We have a right, therefore, to expect in the development of Iowa a truthful, sensible and uncorrupt journalism, and a literature which gives more strength to the mind than agitation to the nerves. Every township should have its modest library of well-chosen volumes of history, biography, travel, popular science, and healthy romance for the winter evenings and leisure hours of farm life.

Granted that Iowa shall have pursued these lines of development, which now appear entirely practicable, what is the picture she will then offer to all observers? Her agriculture and her horticulture will attract the attention and the admiration of all her sister states. Her farms and villages will constitute in reality that "beautiful land" of which her poets already sing. The comfort and contentment, which is above price, will pervade the State. Her wide-spread intelligence will enable her in anxious times to decide the balance in the critical struggles of national politics. Her experienced and thoroughbred statesmen will largely direct the national power. With her all of fortune and hope staked in the soil of her country, her patriotism will, with unflinching courage, sustain the nation against every foe. If it be the will of God that we, like our forefathers, take up "the white man's burden" for the extension of civilization and liberty and the extinction of barbarism, Iowa will sustain the outstretched national arm, and her spirit will expand with the expansion of the nation.

The quartette sang two verses of the "Star Spangled Banner," in which the audience rising joined, when the chairman introduced Hon. Theodore S. Parvin who spoke as follows:

Returning from a long visit to a foreign land I found my name upon the programme of exercises for this occasion as one of the speakers. I was only too glad to get home in time to witness the exercises without taking any part therein and so notified those in charge of the ceremonies, declining to appear in the *role* to which I had been assigned, but in vain. Coming to the city I renewed the request, only to receive another refusal, and so I must endeavor to fill the bill. I need only assure you that the best part of my speech will consist in its brevity.

*Mr. President and Fellow Citizens of Iowa:*

Iowa, once the beautiful land of Black Hawk and Keokuk, and of their associate chiefs! These *red men* have vanished from their hunting grounds which they occupied when I first crossed the Mississippi river, and have given place to another race—"palefaces"—whose mission has been to lift "the white man's burden" and to make a garden of the rich prairies, which in my youthful and school days were pictured to the world as the "Great American Desert." This beautiful land, the home of the *wild rose* (which has become our State emblem), and of the rich maize



(Indian corn), is the home as well of a race of enlightened freemen world-renowned as benefactors of their race, in that from the richness of the soil they have been enabled to send food to the starving millions of Europe and Asia with a liberality and a bounty unknown and unsurpassed in all previous history.

I wish to speak, though briefly, of the *early past*, the long ago of Iowa's history, and upon this occasion I may well say with the poet—

"Backward, turn backward, O, Time, in your flight;  
Make me a child again just for tonight!"

that I may review some of the events, of which I am the only one left to speak, and show their connection with the present time and this auspicious occasion.

Sixty years is a short period in the history of the world and even in that of the history of this country, but in our own history it is a long period because it goes back to the beginning.

Sixty and two years ago the coming 4th of July was laid another Corner-stone, most intimately connected with the history of that which we have laid today—it was the Corner-stone of the government of Iowa. Territorial and State. One of the participants upon that occasion was a young and beardless youth, one who was yet (three months later) to exercise the first great privilege of a freeman and to take part in the selection of those who were to become the legislators of the commonwealth, and of all those who participated or were then present or were at that time citizens of the first capital of the Territory, not one, save your speaker, is left! All have passed over the dark river to join the immense throng who have followed the way of all the living.

We read in Holy Writ that "there were giants in those days," but that had reference to physical attributes,—the giants of our early day were intellectual and moral men who "builded wiser than they knew," and laid broad and deep the foundations upon which their successors, even to the present hour, have builded the beautiful State known far and wide over this and other lands. True, in every department of life "the affections of her people, like the rivers of her border, flow to an inseparable union."

Among those who were active participants upon the occasion to which we have referred were *embryo* governors, one of the Territory and three of the State. There were also embryo senators and representatives in congress, including the first two that were to respond to the name of Iowa when she became a sovereign state. All of these men were makers of history and they did their duty well. The people of Iowa have been *history-makers* ever since; they have made her history a part of the national history upon many a battle-field in our own and foreign lands. Yonder monument, upon which you have all gazed with interest and delight, is but a symbol of the fact that they were heroes and patriots whose life blood testified to their courage, their heroism, patriotism and all the nobler qualities of manhood. Our people, too, have made history not only in our own halls of legislation but in the halls of congress in both branches, from that early day to the present, and we have with us at this hour worthy and noble

successors to those men in our honored senators, and representatives, and State officials. Iowa has made history in the fields of diplomacy creditable to any people, and we have a conspicuous example with us today in the person of our honored friend, the eloquent orator of this occasion to whose words we have listened with so much delight and to which it was quite unnecessary that any supplement should have been added either on my part or that of another. Iowa, too, has made a most noble record upon the historic page in its educational work. The honored President of this occasion was our first State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and from the early hour of his labors to the present we have been making history in the field of education which runs parallel with that of religion, and here, too, we are represented by the later descendants and successors of the past in the persons of the two venerable Chaplains, whose history and service in Iowa runs back to the period whence "the memory of man runneth not to the contrary."

So, my fellow citizens, in all the enterprises that go to make up an advanced civilization have the citizens of Iowa been active through the past half century and more, making history. But how little, unfortunately, of that history has been written! The history of Iowa in the past may be found only in the scattered fragments that have appeared from time to time in the newspaper and periodical press; the historian of Iowa is yet to be, and no more worthy subject could he find than that of spreading upon the printed page the labors and services of those who have "made Iowa" and made it so well. But it is in vain that men make history or even record it, unless those historical fragments shall be gathered together and preserved for future generations and ages. In this respect Iowa has been sadly neglectful. I can count the collectors of the historical records of the past upon the fingers of one hand and still have some to spare. This should not be and will not be in the future. The State has at last awakened to the importance of *collecting* and *preserving* all that relates to the past and to the present, so that when the future comes our successors shall have less labor to perform than we have had to face at the present time.

The State and its rulers are to be congratulated today. And as one of the representatives of the best thought of the people in this line of service, I congratulate them and you today that we have through the Chief Executive of our State laid the Corner-stone of a Historical Building adapted to the purpose and that shall contain in the future the relics that have thus far been gathered and may yet be gathered through the energy, the perseverance and the wise discrimination of the man who today is deserving of all honor—I need not name my old-time and very dear friend, the Hon. CHARLES ALDRICH. He has done and is doing a work that shall connect his name for all coming time with those who have made and who have written or may yet make and write the history of Iowa, the fairest of all lands upon which the sun ever shone.

With you I feel happy, very happy, to witness the consummation of a purpose and an enterprise to which we have looked forward for some years. I may not witness the final completion of this building, although I hope



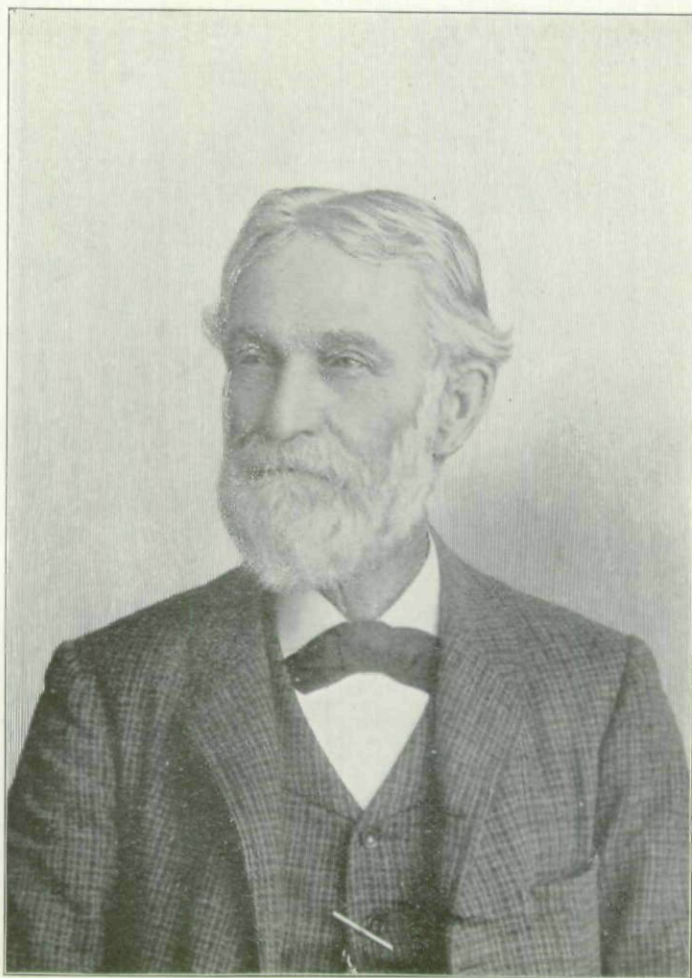
to be present at the dedication of this its first wing, for the frosts and sunshine of eighty and two winters and summers have passed over my head. More than three score of them have been passed in Iowa and during that time I have been more or less closely identified with her history, "all of which," as Virgil said, "I saw, and part of which" (I may with becoming modesty add) "I was." To have lived in such a period and to have labored with others in this vineyard is an honor such as comes to but few men, I appreciate it, I feel it, and I thank you one and all most sincerely for your interest upon this occasion and for the attention you have shown me in listening to these remarks, which, without *preparation or thought*, have come unbidden from the heart and head, a tribute and an offering to testify to my very great interest in this work and to express my approval to those who have had a hand in its inauguration.

Upon the conclusion of Mr. Parvin's masterly and most enthusiastic address, which was frequently interrupted by hearty applause, there were repeated calls for Mr. Charles Aldrich, who was introduced by Mr. Harlan. Mr. Aldrich said that having understood that he would be called to the stand for a few moments, he had reduced to writing what he had deemed it proper to say. His remarks were as follows:

*Mr. President and Fellow Citizens:*

Among the States of the middle west, Iowa, up to the year 1892, had pursued an altogether anomalous course in the matter of preserving the materials for her history. True, we had a State Historical Society, existing, as the statute declared, "under the auspices of the State University," at Iowa City. But this society, while composed of gentlemen most competent for the performance of a great work, had only the most meager pecuniary support. It had come down from the days of 1857, keeping up its organization, looking forward to "a good time coming," and doing everything possible in the direction of collecting historical materials; but it could only fill a limited measure of usefulness under such inadequate support. The work accomplished was excellent so far as it went, for all of which its members will ever, and most deservedly, be held in grateful remembrance. In the meantime the state of Wisconsin was laying the foundations for a great historical collection which is simply marvelous in its extent. Later on, Kansas, Nebraska, and Minnesota projected similar collections, which in many directions have been attended with great success. In comparison with the work of these states we were doing very little—scarcely a fraction of what should have been accomplished. From 1884 to 1892 I had been working in the capitol upon a collection which I had given to the State. During this time I came to keenly realize that our State was almost wholly neglecting its proper historical work. Had there existed a determination to wipe out all remembrance or record of the Indians who once occupied





*Charles Aldrich*

CHARLES ALDRICH.

Editor of THE ANNALS OF IOWA, and Curator and Secretary of the Historical Department;  
Clerk of the Iowa House of Representatives 1860, 1862, 1866 and 1870;  
Representative 1882-84.

our territory as well as of the pioneer settlers and our peerless soldiers, we could hardly have proceeded more systematically. We had an abundance of materials in our mounds to supply more than one great museum, but while as a state we were doing nothing to collect and preserve them for the instruction and gratification of our own people, they were eagerly carried away for the benefit of other communities. While at Madison, Wis., in 1887, I learned that the Historical Library of that state contained the histories of seventy Iowa counties, while in our own State Library there were but half that number. We were ignoring all publications concerning the North American Indians, while Wisconsin, Kansas, Nebraska, and Minnesota were simply seeking everything on that great subject. Not one of our leading state offices contained a set of its own printed reports. The original copies which went to the public printer were not preserved, and it seemed but a question of time until the last printed copy would disappear. Public documents do not seem to enjoy much general favor until they are needed for some important purpose.

But this neglect and waste of valuable public documents does not appertain alone to Iowa. One of the ripest scholars and most distinguished men of our state lately had occasion to make sundry historical investigations in the State Department at Washington. He was shocked to learn that valuable maps and other documents which he had consulted twenty-five years ago and which were indispensable in the adjustment of important public questions, had disappeared and that there was no clue by which they could be found. These facts show the necessity of committing this work to a Historical Society or to a special department, charged with the responsibility of making collections and of keeping them securely.

Had any man undertaken to write the history of Iowa, his first work would be a trip to Madison to study Iowa publications. Our colleges were proceeding in much the same way. Some of them, at least, had not a complete set of their own catalogues, saying nothing of other publications, to show their origin and the current of their own history. One institution had long ignored my repeated requests for its "literature," or treated them with scant cordiality. I thought I had made matters more than even with them when its genial secretary was obliged to come to the Historical Department to consult these same publications which I had picked up with much difficulty. More than this, while at Madison I saw their collection of oil portraits of Wisconsin and western worthies from the earliest days—illustrious statesmen, soldiers, pioneers, missionaries, and noted Indians, some three hundred in number—an art gallery in itself. Here in our own State Capitol we had the portraits of nine of our governors and one United States senator. Four of these were excellent works of art, while the other six were very poor. That was the extent of our Iowa art collections.

Fully realizing this state of things, so humiliating to a proper State pride, I set to work to do what I could to correct it. At the start I had very little success. But by gradual approaches, something in the way in which a fortress is invested and at last captured, I finally succeeded in waking up the legislature to a sense of its duty in this direction.

But it took six years of hard work. I wrote many articles for the newspapers, setting these things forth, and, best of all, our Iowa journalists without exception stood by me in a spirit of generous appreciation and genuine patriotism. They have my most grateful thanks and are entitled to yours. The Pioneer Law Makers' association seconded my efforts with like generosity. And I say it now with profound gratitude, that Governors William Larrabee, Horace Boies, Frank D. Jackson, Francis M. Drake, and Leslie M. Shaw, each in official communications, warmly commended the enterprise to the favor of the legislature.

True, I met with many rebuffs and unjust criticisms, and obstacles were thrown in my way. But of all that I do not complain. This work was simply an innovation—a new idea in our State—and as a matter of course it would fail to be understood and would meet with opposition. Then, there has been an indisposition to create new offices. I am willing to admit that I felt many times like abandoning the work. But a few earnest and far-seeing men urged me to keep on, and I have remained with it. Friends of the movement, however, kept increasing—in fact, there was no lack of friends as soon as its genuine utility began to be realized. As a State enterprise, it appealed to the patriotic impulses of the people.

One word as to what has been accomplished by this department. We already possess a large collection of works on the North American Indians, much the best in Iowa, and doubtless equalled in few western states. Of four of the most comprehensive publications we have sumptuous editions, aside from the cheaper copies for ordinary use, with many miscellaneous works, books of travel and official reports. We have the histories—poor though some of them most unquestionably are—of nearly ninety Iowa counties, and are obtaining all these local publications as fast as they are issued. We aim to secure a copy of every book issued in the State, and all school and church literature brought out within our borders. The surrounding states are constantly striving to secure copies of all local Iowa historical publications. One unused to work of this kind can scarcely imagine how useful sooner or later these things become. Our collection of census and labor publications, both under the State and national government, is complete enough to enable the department to meet almost any demand upon it for such statistical information. In the direction of Iowa newspapers we have nearly two thousand bound volumes. It is a great loss to the State that we have not thirteen thousand volumes like Kansas, but that state has been in the work for twenty-five years, while ours dates back only six years. Five Iowa journalists have donated their files to this department, running back twenty-five to forty-five years. Probably a day never passes which does not see people consulting our newspapers, and often for matters of great consequence. Quite lately a bit of information from our files became of the highest importance in settling the title to a large amount of real estate.

A specialty has also been made of books relating to slavery and the war for the Union. There are few directions in which the department cannot supply information upon these topics.



Just now, by direction of the trustees, we are laying the foundation for a choice collection in biography and genealogy. In these days of "Colonial Dames" and "Sons and Daughters of the Revolution" there is a constant demand for information in these directions. There are descendants of the fathers of the American Revolution, of the soldiers of 1812, and later wars, all through our State, and calls for information are constantly increasing.

The department has secured as gifts thirty-five fine oil portraits, including pioneers, soldiers and statesmen. These are now scattered in various rooms throughout the capitol. Several more have been promised at an early day. This branch of the work will no doubt rapidly increase as soon as it can be exhibited to good advantage, and we shall also soon possess fine portraits of some of our splendid women who have nursed sick and wounded soldiers in army hospitals or fought battles for the grandest principles.

One of the most important works carried on by this department is the publication of the third series of *THE ANNALS OF IOWA*, our quarterly magazine of history and biography, with many portraits and other illustrations. We have now under consideration articles sufficient to fill its pages for more than two years, with the promise of many more. Much of this accumulation of historical matter is of the highest importance. By permission of our trustees a copy of *THE ANNALS* is sent to each organized library in the State. It also goes to all Iowa newspapers which come to the department, and to many historical publications out of the state. Its circulation is therefore devoted to such good as it may effect by bringing it close to the people and to students of history.

Our museum materials long ago outgrew the space which could be given them. They must rapidly accumulate in the future. Our Iowa mounds still contain thousands of choice specimens of pottery, stone and bone implements, and we should see that they are secured and kept here at home. Three very considerable collections are now offered to the Historical Department in which archaeology is largely represented. Once the State can take care of museum properties, there would seem no end to the valuable additions which can be secured. There are private collections in many of our towns and cities which will soon enough be offered to the State as gifts, upon the sole condition that they shall be well taken care of and exhibited to the public.

The great thought at the basis of this undertaking, as I have stated, is the admitted duty of the State to preserve the materials for its history. After that legitimately follow the establishment of the art gallery and museum, in which most objects shall be illustrative of some point or fact in the history of Iowa or of our country. It is due to the plain men and women and children of the State, who live out on the farms and come here but seldom, and whose share in the government is almost wholly limited to the payment of their taxes, that, when they visit their capital city, they shall be able to find a great Historical museum to interest and instruct them. People of wealth who travel to other cities and countries may feast their eyes

with such sights in endless profusion, but there are tens of thousands of our own people who are and will continue to be debarred from such privileges. They are entitled to see here such collections and displays as are spread before us at the capitals of other leading western states. This statement is incontrovertible. The time to secure historical data and museum materials is when they can be had, instead of waiting until our opportunities are forever lost.

How stands this enterprise today? It seems to me that we have a most encouraging outlook. True, this present structure is but a wing of the future great building—only a little more than one-fourth of the edifice in contemplation. I believe, however, that you will agree with me that thus far everything looks well. It may be expected to fill up very rapidly, and it will become from the start a point of interest second to nothing whatever in our State. As the instrumentality through which Iowa history will be preserved for the benefit of the coming generations, its value will soon enough rise above and beyond any estimate, and its attractions for the people will increase with every passing day. We shall not only have a beautiful, but a most substantial, thoroughly fire-proof edifice. With adamant brick from Hamilton, Webster and Polk counties, and the magnificent stone of Le Grand, it only needed Carnegie iron and steel to insure solidity and durability. We may expect that this building will become a model in every respect. I believe its great mission will be so well appreciated that the people will demand its early completion—for it is an undertaking most emphatically in the interests of all the people.

The quartette then sang "Iowa," by Major S. H. M. Byers, when the exercises were appropriately closed by the Rev. Father B. C. Lenehan of Boone, who pronounced the Benediction in these words:

May the Holy Spirit of God, Our Father, bless this work begun, and bring it to most fruitful issue; bless this commonwealth and our Nation with wisdom, strength and peace, and keep all the people safe in His service forever, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Owing to the fact that after the Corner-stone was laid the assemblage repaired to the capitol, the order of exercises was slightly changed, but the program was carried out substantially as previously announced.



*Faithfully yours,*  
*B. C. Lenehan*

REV. B. C. LENEHAN.

Rector of the Church of the Sacred Heart, at Boone, Iowa; author of  
"The First Bishop of Iowa," ANNALS, Vol. III, pp. 577-600.



Copyright of *Annals of Iowa* is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.